

## FOREWORD

This Water Transfer Program Plan describes the water transfer component of the CALFED Bay Delta Program (CALFED or Program).

The Water Transfer Program, like all components of the CALFED Program, is being developed and evaluated at a programmatic level. The Water Transfer Program does **not propose or analyze** any specific transfers or level of transfer activity. The Program is completing what is referred to as Phase II, in which the CALFED agencies have developed a Preferred Program Alternative that was subject to a comprehensive programmatic environmental review. This report describes both the long-term programmatic actions that are assessed in the Programmatic EIS/EIR, as well as certain more specific actions that may be carried out during implementation of the Program. The programmatic actions in a long-term program of this scope necessarily are described generally and without detailed site-specific information. More detailed information will be analyzed as the Program is refined in its next phase.

Implementation of Phase III is expected to begin in 2000, after the Programmatic EIS/EIR is finalized and adopted. Because of its' size and complexity, the Program likely will be implemented over a period of 20-30 years. Program actions will be refined as implementation proceeds, initially focusing on the first 7 years (Stage 1). Subsequent site-specific proposals that involve potentially significant environmental impacts will require site-specific environmental review that tiers off the Programmatic EIS/EIR.

The Water Transfer Program Plan describes a strategic plan of actions, policies, and processes to facilitate the further development of the water transfer market in California, while protecting water rights and area of origin priorities and providing safeguards against source area environmental and economic impacts. Generally, the water transfer element relies on the existing legal and regulatory framework, and does not recommend any major changes to the California water rights system.

The Water Transfer Program will be further refined as resolution is reached on the issues through processes which will continue into the implementation stage of the CALFED Program.